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ABSTRACT

A theoretical framework based primarily on the humanistic psychology of Abraham Maslow is used in developing a humanistic approach to speech education. The holistic view of human learning and behavior, inherent in this approach, is seen to be compatible with a model of effective leadership. Specific applications of this approach to speech education are outlined in the areas of trust-building, visualization of concepts, and desensitization. (AA)

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HUMANISTIC SPEECH EDUCATION TO CREATE LEADERSHIP MODELS

by Beverley Jeanne Oka

My concern for the healthful growing of my students in the Introductory Speech class that I teach at the University of Hawaii has led me to a number of resources, both literary and experiential, on human potential and growth. I was primarily interested in alternative teaching styles and attitudes to stimulate more interest and genuine excitement in the classroom, while assuring that the cognitive objectives of the course were met. As a result of this search I have come to realize that a change in my perception of the student was necessary. I tended to treat students as receptacles of knowledge, which assumes a body/mind split, when in fact the student is an integrated unit. The internal, affective growth of students is an occurence which needs as much attention as efforts to improve the overt behavior of speech performance, listening, and information transmission skills.

A modification of my goals accompanied the holistic perspective. When students become involved in their feeling nature while developing competence, they are really developing leadership qualities. So the shift is not away from speech performance, but a recognition of the effective use of speech communication from a leadership position. I found that the humanistic psychology approach to education provided the theoretical framework for meeting these goals. The experiences of humanistic educators presented evidence that the integration of cognitive and affective goals is worthwhile and effective.

Although I intend to present a conceptual model of leadership further on in this paper, perhaps a personal experience on your part will help you conceptualize what I mean by communication from a

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leadership position. Take a moment to relax and to recreate a peak communication experience that you have had. What was the most ecstatic, transcendent communication encounter you have ever had? Although peak experiences are unique events personal to each individual, I will list some example to help you recall you peak communication experience. Perhaps it was with a loved one: no words were exchanged, just a perceptive look, and you both knew what the other intended to say. Or you met someone for the first time and you immediately felt a loving kinship with that person. You knew that this was a person you had to get to know better. Or you were giving a speech and you knew that your audience was with you all the way. What a feeling of control, of power, of knowing that you are really an excellent speaker. Close your eyes for a moment, now, and visualize a single communication event which you could describe as glorious, happiest, the most joyous of all communication events you have ever encountered. Try to recall the exact details...Where were you? Who were you with? What was said or done? How did you feel? Especially how did you feel differently about yourself at that time? How did you change if at all?...Now that you have visualized the experience, recreated it in your mind's eye, can you think of a word to describe the experience? Would you write it down here: _____. When I finished this mental trip I felt really glad for it and the word I used to describe the communication event was "love." You might have written "Wow" or "Beautiful" or "Fantastic" or any number of other words that mean essentially the same thing---a very perfect experience.

Now I ask you, don't you want to experience more of these moments, and don't you want your students to have more moments like this, too?

It is at moments of peak experience when the full model for leadership emerges, for these moments allow one to experience the power that comes from really feeling fully human. Leaders have more peak experiences, are healthier in mind and body, are more creative, and they lead more enriching lives than followers. Why? Because they are free and responsible people who act in harmony with their beliefs, values and ideals. Harmony, or balance, is the key to personal power, to leadership. (Willhite, 1975)

I am excited about the prospect of presenting the humanistic education materials I have discovered. I feel the humanistic approach will encourage the student to experience more and more leadership qualities that lie within him. The student will be helped to become aware of himself as a free and responsible individual, and he will be enriched by growing towards modeling the competence, spirit and values of a leader. The integration of speech skills with leadership qualities will require a learning environment in which the student as a thinking-feeling-willing person will be of uppermost importance.

Humanistic Education - A Rationale

Humanistic psychology provides the theoretical framework for the areas of human experience and learning that the humanistic education movement is striving to include in the school curriculum. Over twenty years have passed since A.H. Maslow published his very influential book, Motivation and Personality (1954), which presented a third alternative of human behavior to the orthodox Freudian and objective behavioral psychologies. Humanistic psychology, as Maslow's Third Psychology is commonly called, has proven to be a significant force in creating a new conception of the student as a thinking-feeling-

willing organism, a person who has the potential for personal leadership. It is a welcome contrast to Freud's pessimistic view of human nature and to the stimulus-response paradigm of the behaviorists.

If you will recall, Maslow's theory of human motivation differentiated between basic needs and metaneeds. Among the basic needs are hunger, affection, security and self-esteem. Examples of metaneeds are justice, goodness, beauty, order and unity. Maslow termed the basic needs as deficiency needs, while the metaneeds are growth needs. The basic needs take precedence over the metaneeds in almost every instance. A starving man cannot strive for love while his stomach remains empty. By the same token, a person filled with self-doubt and fears of inadequacy will have a difficult time seeking beauty and goodness in life until his self-confidence develops. In Maslow's investigations he found that the satisfaction of basic needs differentiated healthy people from sich people. Deficiency characteristics were found to be inactive, at a low ebb, or functionally absent in the healthy person. To further substantiate his theory Maslow examined a group of people who he believed had achieved self-actualization (Lincoln, Thoreau, Beethoven, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Einstein). Self-actualized people were described as those who were striving to grow, people energized towards meeting metaneeds. He found that they shared distinguishing characteristics, which he summarized as follows:

1. Superior perception of reality.
2. Increased acceptance of self, of others, and of nature.
3. Increased spontaniety.
4. Increase in problem-centering.

5. Increased detachment and desire for privacy.
6. Increased autonomy, and resistance to enculturation.
7. Greater freshness of appreciation, and richness of emotional reaction.
8. Higher frequency of peak experiences.
9. Increased identification with the human species.
10. Changed interpersonal relations.
11. More democratic character structure.
12. Greatly increased creativeness.
13. Certain changes in the value system. (from Maslow, 1968)

Maslow suggests that growth is not only a progressive gratification of the basic needs, but also an inward striving for growth over and beyond the basic needs. Thus the desire for fulfillment or self-actualization is a natural phenomenon inherent in all human beings.

The appeal of Maslow's conceptual framework of human motivation lies in this recognition of the virtually limitless capacity that man has to grow and to become fulfilled. Humanistic psychology has focused attention on the human potential for creative growth, a desire to achieve a unity with himself, with others, and with nature. This holistic approach implies a need for an integrated educational system that promotes learning at all levels of a whole being.

It is not surprising that the recognition of the holistic nature of man is emerging in other disciplines. Recent research in split-brain functions have led neurophysiologists to propose that the two halves of the brain can be differentially characterized by their functions. The left hemisphere thinks in words and symbols. It is active, calculating, reasoning, and is predominantly analytical in its functioning. On the other hand, the right side of the brain thinks in pictures, is spatially oriented and operates at an intuitive, emotional level.

The split-brain theory provides further evidence for the need to recognize and work with the intuitive as well as the intellectual nature of the learner.

Self-Actualization - A Leadership Model

Before turning our attention to humanistic speech education for purposes of creating leadership models, I would like to review a model of leadership proposed by Howard W. Johnson, President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The paper that President Johnson presented to the Conference Committee on the Requirements for Leadership in the 1980's serves to illustrate that across disciplines there are similar descriptions of leadership patterns. Johnson discusses leadership characteristics from a business management and political science background, yet the components of his conceptual model of leadership parallels many characteristics that distinguish the self-actualized person that Maslow describes from a psychological perspective. The similarity of the two approaches affirms for me that a person who is gratifying his needs with a heightened awareness so that his primary concern is with self-fulfillment rather than self-esteem is developing into a model of leadership.

The first component Johnson lists is Competency, which he describes as "effective intelligence" and creative thinking. A leader performs a task with knowledge of the multi-dimensional nature of the task and with an awareness of the interdependence of the environment, the economy and the society with that task.

Secondly, Johnson lists Values, which he identifies as the underlying beliefs, supports and drives that a person has. A leader has a sense of high ideals that go further than personal ambition. A

leader is committed to acting on a set of humane interests that are directed towards the enhancement of the quality of life.

The third component of leadership Johnson calls Direction, an action-oriented quality closely related to Values. Direction is described as a combination of goal-centeredness and strategy-mindedness. The goals of a leader are dreams purposely set just beyond his reach. A leader experiences internal harmony that results from visions of greatness and trust in his judgement for appropriate action. This harmony within provides the strength and courage needed for planning strategies and implementing plans to move towards goals. Harmony also results to the fourth component of leadership.

The fourth component that Johnson says is essential to leadership is Spirit, which is a combination of personal curiosity, enthusiasm, and physical energy. A leader cheerfully accepts challenges and risk-taking ventures. When his goals are at stake, his spirit provides the energy necessary to continue to strive towards them. It is this spiritual energy that creates the element of mystery that accompanies a leader, the sign of the extraordinary. (Johnson, 1968)

Johnson concludes that few people designated as leaders possess the qualities he describes. Furthermore he charges that Universities, which are the primary social institutions responsible for leadership education, often give only cursory attention to developing these qualities. Leadership, he contends, does not develop in the classroom because of the lack of a holistic view of life. Johnson recognizes the necessity for educational institutions to provide opportunities for cultivating values, goals, spirit, and competence.

Humanistic Education - A Holistic Approach

I believe that the holistic assumptions, processes, and goals of humanistic speech education will lay the path for individual self-actualization and leadership for both the learner and the teacher. Educators can meet the challenge of developing mental competence while concurrently appealing to the emotional, feeling, physical nature of students. A balanced speech curriculum will bridge the objective, analytical, descriptive-presciptive presentation of speech skills with subjective, intuitive, passive-receptive learning.

In his novel, Island (1962), Aldous Huxley depicts an ideal society on the island of Pala that has incorporated the best of Western technology and science with the best of Eastern psychology and philosophy to further the goal of liberating each Palinese citizen. Mrs. Narayan, a very wise Palinese educator, beautifully expresses the desirability of the holistic approach.

> "Every course the children take is punctuated by periodical bridge-building sessions. Everything from dissected frogs to the spiral nebulae, it all gets looked at receptively as well as conceptually, as a fact of aesthetic or spiritual experience as well as in terms of science or history or economics. Training in receptivity is the complement and antidote to training in analysis and symbol manipulation. Both kinds of training are absolutely indispensable. If you neglect either of them you'll never grow into a fully human being." (Huxley, 1962, p. 255)

The practice of humanistic education has not been reserved for the fictional children of Pala. There are currently a number of educators who are advancing the humanistic education processes and goals by presenting cognitive materials complimented by subjective exercises.

For example, a recent Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation publication reported the use of a guided fantasy trip to aid in

learning content in an electronics class. The teacher used fantasy to provide the students with an imaginary experience in the land of invisible magnetic and electric fields surrounding the windings and core of a transformer. Later the students were able to relate the visualizations to the verbal, logical material presented in the textbook. The teacher reported more success using this experiential approach than he had met before using traditional cognitive teaching methods. The quality of the students' lab work further substantiated his conclusion.

A pilot project at the Esalen Institute provides another example of the current efforts to translate humanistic and educational psychology theory into practice. Dr. George I. Brown and the Esalen staff were awarded a grant by the Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation for "a pilot project to explore ways to adapt approaches in the affective domain to the school curriculum." Dr. Brown and his colleagues used this opportunity to develop and practice "confluent education" techniques to integrate the affective and cognitive elements in individual and group learning. Affective is defined as the feeling or emtional aspect of experience and learning, while cognitive refers to the activity of the mind in knowing an object, the intellectual funtion. What the individual learns and the intellectual process of learning falls withing the cognitive domain. Affective learning is the acquisition of an attitude or value. Dr. Brown expresses the natural congruence of the two approaches with the following statement: "It should be apparent that there is no intellectual learning without some sort of feeling, and there are no feelings without the mind's being somehow involved." (Brown, 1971, p. 4)

The work in the Ford-Esalen project was essentially exploratory and clinically oriented; thus there is little empirical evidence to support the positive results of confluent education. However, the teachers who participated in the project reported growth, change and a special kind of enthusiasm by both the teacher and the students. A ninth grade history-english teacher listed the following as areas in which students were aided by affective-learning techniques:

1. Better learning of cognitive material.
2. Heightened motivation and response to learning situations.
3. Greater appreciation of self, nature, others, feelings, etc.
4. Greater pupil responsibility.(Brown, 1971, pp. 198-199)

My reaction to this teacher's evaluation of confluent education was, "Wow, this is just what I've been looking for to inject excitement and interest in my speech classes." In addition, the description indicates that opportunities for students to grow towards self-actualization and leadership can be provided in an educational setting.

Humanistic Speech Education - Some Techniques

The remainder of this paper will describe a sample of exercises I propose will effectively incorporate affective learning with speech competence. The exercises are designed to develop models of leadership though experiencing leadership qualities at a subjective level of consciousness. Each exercise is accompanied by an intellectual or performance-oriented application of the subjective experience. Judging from the success of projects like the Ford-Esalen Project, I believe dynamic growth in all levels of being will result.

1. Trust-Building

Trust in one's self and trust in others connects and holds people together in an interpersonal relationship. Trust in a relationship allows the participants to move from low-risk, self-centered, evaluative communication to high-risk, other-centered, empathic communication. Participation in a trust circle can help students to begin to understand the need to trust, the desirability of trust, and the notion that we do not have to fear trust.

For the trust circle exercise students are asked to form a close circle with a group of 10-12 classmates. One member of the circle steps into the center and disorients himself by closing his eyes and turning around several times both to the left and to the right. With his eyes still closed, he stands in the middle of the circle and allows his body to fall back while his feet remain firmly planted, trusting that members of his circle will catch him before he falls to the ground. I have participated in several trust circles, and I have found that trust in myself and in others increases a little more each time I find myself falling backwards.

Another exercise that builds trust is the trust walk. This exercise also helps students to perceive things in other ways besides seeing. Students are paired with a partner of their choice and are given the following instructions: One of you is to close your eyes, while the other is to be a guide. The guide is to provide a variety of sensory experiences in touching, smelling, tasting, body motion, etc. He is encouraged to be as creative as possible in selecting these experiences. After about twenty minutes the students are asked to switch roles. (Brown, 1971, p. 37)

Following these exercises in trust-building students will be assigned to read the textbook material on interpersonal relationships. They will be instructed to relate the feeling they experienced with the sections on risk-taking and perception.

2. Visualiztion

There are many visualization techniques to help students perceive concepts at a subjective level of consciousness. The student is put into a relaxed state and then asked to visualize a particular event, object, or idea. While visualizing the student is encouraged to experience the vision with all five senses and to get emotionally involved with whatever is happening in his imagination. With practice visualization is like having a private movie projector and screen in the mind. The electronics teacher's guided fantasy trip that I mentioned before is an example of the usefulness of visualization techniques.

Visualization is really a creative means of intrapersonal communication. This technique is a natural compliment to the material on self-concept, personal goal-setting, and problem-solving. For example, you can ask students to draw an imaginary road map on the inside of their eyelids. The left side of the map represents where they are now; the right side of the map represents where they want to go. Give the students time to get in touch with both sides of the map. Then ask them to notice the obstacles in the middle of the map that are blocking their way to where they want to go. Ask them: Can you do anything about the barriers now? If not, don't try to change them, just be aware of them and get in touch with how you feel about them. (Brown, 1971, p. 36)

Peak communication experiences can be created by visualization exercises. Students are asked to see themselves giving a speech successfully. Get them excited about the experience through your verbal instructions. Ask the students to feel the positive reaction projected by the audience and to feel how terrific it is to be transmitting ideas so well. The exercise can be extended to help students actually plan and organize their speeches using the road map technique. The obstacles in the middle of the road will clarify for the students exactly what he needs to do to experience the feeling of fantastic success he forsees at the end of the road.

3. Desensitization

Dr. Lauren Ekroth, Associate Professor of Speech at the University of Hawaii, conducts a stage fright lab each semester to help students reduce speaking anxiety. He uses desensitization techniques which involve relaxation and visualization. After teaching students to relax when listening to taped music he asks students to visualize those concerns which cause them to feel anxious about giving a speech. The students begin to associate these concerns with relaxation, a pleasant sensation. After a series of desensitization sessions, the relaxation that the student experiences when thinking about speech performance neutralizes the fear that was normally associated with giving a speech.

Dr. Ekroth reports that when students have participated in more than the minimum number of sessions, relearning or shaping begins to take place. Students feel good when relaxed, they are relaxed when they think about speech performance, soon they begin to feel good about giving speeches. Students have said that they now look forward to giving speeches, because they welcome the positive feeling

that they have associated with this event.

The theoretical implications and practical applications of a humanistic approach to speech education have been discussed. Current applications seem to be supportive of the holistic perspective inherent in the leadership model. Creating leadership models in a humanistic educational setting suggests new horizons for speech education and affirms the value of human life.

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